

the Year Award for his dedication and commitment to CHST for over 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in wishing him all the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Zion Baptist Church, to recognize and commemorate 127 years of religious devotion through community building and advocacy in North Minneapolis.

Zion Baptist Church, founded in 1889, has sought to provide a strong, steadfast foundation for their congregants through biblical teaching, equipping families through faith, and fostering an uncompromising belief in God. The church has fought for important changes in policy, community support systems, and physical safety—all led by their deep devotion to their faith.

For four decades, until 2012, the Reverend Curtis Herron led his congregation on the belief that “the church started in the building, but ended in the world.” Through his advocacy for affordable housing, racial equity, and job creation, Reverend Curtis Herron championed substantial improvements for Zion Baptist Church, and the Minneapolis community as a whole. The people of Zion Baptist Church have guided families along the path of faith while engaging them in local issues; and they show no signs of slowing down.

Zion Baptist Church is one of the largest and most influential African American churches in Minneapolis, and for the last 127 years their advocacy has helped make our community the best it can be. Their legacy of lifting up the most vulnerable in our community should serve as a reminder that faith calls us to stand up against injustice, no matter the form.

HONORING JOHN MEALEY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AS FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COACHELLA VALLEY HOUSING COALITION

HON. RAUL RUIZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to congratulate John Mealey on his retirement after 34 years of leadership in helping build communities and changing lives for thousands of farmworkers, service workers, and chronically ill residents through the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC).

In 1982, Mr. Mealey led the way with community leaders to address the housing needs of hundreds of low income families in the Coachella Valley by forming CVHC. That same year, CVHC received its first grant of \$10,000 from Aetna Foundation and in 1986 they built the first low-income farmworkers complex in Coachella, Ca.

Fast-forwarding three decades—and thanks to Mr. Mealey’s diligent work and vision—he

has helped fundraise over \$700 million toward building more than 4,500 homes and apartments for low and very low-income residents in the Coachella Valley. Furthermore, under Mr. Mealey’s guidance, CVHC has created home ownership opportunities from Palm Springs to Blythe in the 36th Congressional district. This translates into a dream come true for families and a better and brighter future for generations to come.

In 2002, the Board of Directors and employees of the CVHC established the JFM College Scholarship Fund Program in honor of Mr. John F. Mealey. The Scholarship fund awards scholarships annually to students who reside in affordable housing communities developed by CVHC. The JFM has generated half a million in scholarship funds and benefitted more than 600 students.

Mr. Mealey’s extraordinary career began in Philadelphia at a nonprofit housing organization. Before joining CVHC in 1982, he worked at the Riverside Department of Housing and Community Development. Mr. Mealey also served as a board member on the California Coalition for Rural Housing, the National Rural Housing Coalition and the National Equity Fund.

Amongst the numerous reputable recognitions that Mr. Mealey has obtained throughout his remarkable career, he recently was honored with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) award. This distinction is presented to those individuals who demonstrate the lifetime achievement of leadership in rural development, building and sustaining an organization that benefits rural communities and has a regional impact.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Mr. Mealey who for nearly four decades dedicated his time to better the lives of underserved communities. For his work and on behalf of the thousands of families of the 36th district of California, I would like to offer my sincerest thanks and congratulate Mr. Mealey for his exceptional commitment. I wish him and his wife Patricia the best on his well-deserved retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably delayed and not present for roll call votes 83 and 84.

Had I been present. I would have voted yes on both Number 83 and Number 84.

HONORING WILLIE FRITZ FOR HIS DECADE OF LEADERSHIP AS FIRST SELECTMAN OF CLINTON, CT

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to thank a public servant from Clinton, Connecticut who has served his community with distinction for more than ten years. Mr. William

“Willie” Fritz, First Selectman since 2005, spent his decade of tenure leading the town into improved financial and physical shape, and constantly making himself accessible to town residents. Willie’s public service started in Clinton local government in 2000, when he served on the Public Works and Planning and Zoning Commissions and immediately displayed a knack for putting the town’s needs into action.

After his election as first selectman in 2005, Willie championed the needs of the people of Clinton. His legacy is visible in the beautiful buildings and public spaces around town. These efforts resulted in numerous state grants for the Main Street streetscape, the renovation of the Town Dock uplands, and a modern multi-use turf field at the Indian River Recreation Complex. Each of these spaces and the value they provide to the Clinton community is a testament to Willie’s achievements as a local leader.

One of Willie’s noteworthy achievements was in managing the renovation of the Andrews Memorial Town Hall. After two decades of inattention, the hall’s magnificent architecture required urgent repairs and adjustments. Willie secured vital funds from the state Commission on Historic Preservation, and ultimately restored the hall to its former glory. The beloved building, which houses offices, meeting rooms, a kitchen and auditorium, is now fit for use by the community, and is a destination for architecture historians and students.

Willie has also had a hand in the construction of the new Morgan High School, and in bringing new senior housing to Clinton. As Willie has said “Nobody is more hands-on than a first selectman in a smaller town.” Willie has been an exemplary town leader; responsive to his neighbors, forward-thinking in his vision for the town, and full of energy. His extraordinary career for some of us is not too surprising. After all, his mother Mary Fritz is a legendary State Representative in the Connecticut General Assembly, representing the towns of Cheshire and Wallingford. I not only served with Mary during my time as a State Representative, but sat next to her on the House Floor. She has the same commitment to the public interest as her son, and the State of Connecticut has benefitted greatly from the Fritz legacy.

I truly believe that Willie’s work for the people of our state is not done and hope he will find new ways to contribute to the public good. I ask my colleagues to please join me in thanking Willie for his many years of service as First Selectman in Clinton, and in wishing him well in the years to come.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$19,064,879,099,682.52. We’ve added \$8,438,002,050,769.44 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could

have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

SUCCESS STEMS FROM HARD WORK

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kalpana Vaidya of Sugar Land, Texas for being a Distinguished Finalist in the Texas' Top Youth Volunteers of 2016, given by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Kalpana is a senior at Stephen F. Austin High School and a scout in the Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council troop. Her community service project, "The World of Science" is a hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education (STEM) activity for kindergartners up to eighth-graders. Now becoming an annual affair, her project was sponsored by the Austin High School Honor Society and helped them raise \$2,000. Kalpana's activity has also attracted organizations such as the Houston Natural Science Museum and the Baytown Nature Center. Her efforts in creating this activity led her to become a distinguished finalist in The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. These awards recognize talented young men and women across America that have graciously served their communities.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Kalpana Vaidya for being a Distinguished Finalist. We are so proud of her and can't wait to see what she does next.

HONORING REVEREND FREDERICK CRAWFORD

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise during this month, dedicated to the celebration of African Americans who have made great contributions to the world, to pay tribute to Reverend Frederick Crawford for his many years of compassionate service and tireless work to improve the lives of our community residents.

Reverend Frederick Crawford is the Senior Pastor of Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church and the founder of Faithbook, which is a public group on Facebook designed to inspire and encourage via the internet. Established in 2014, Faithbook has more than 3,000 members and counting. This group was designed by Rev. Crawford to encourage, strengthen, and pray for believers in Christ. Members are welcomed to post prayers, words of encouragement, scriptures, testimonies, prayer requests, sermons, pictures, videos, and advertisements of church events.

Reverend Crawford is a native of the Bronx. He is the oldest of four children born to Reverend Dr. Fletcher and Mother Arnetta Crawford. He graduated from Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary where he earned a Bachelor's of Science in Business Adminis-

tration and Minor in Religious Studies. He continued his studies at Alliance Theological Seminary, Unification Theological Seminary and later obtained a Bachelor's of Theology from American International Theological Seminary. He was ordained to be the Assistant Pastor of Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church by Dr. Fletcher Crawford in August 1988.

Reverend Crawford is the third generation of his family to serve as pastors of Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church. His father, Dr. Fletcher Crawford served for fifty years and his grandfather, Rev. Jeremiah Crawford, organized this community institution in 1946. Prior to his leadership at Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Reverend Crawford was the pastor at the First Calvary Baptist Church in Harlem, NY for twenty years before being called back to Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church in 2006. Upon Dr. Fletcher Crawford's retirement, Rev. Frederick Crawford was installed as Pastor at Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church on August 20, 2006. Pastor Crawford is happily married to Lady Antoinette Crawford, and they have four children; Lamont, Shapri, Hezekiah, and Chloe.

Under his leadership, Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church has created numerous programs to assist families in the Bronx. Many of those programs focus on addressing a serious issue in the Bronx—hunger and food insecurity. Through Reverend Crawford's leadership, Union Grove feeds more than 1,000 families every year during Thanksgiving Week, providing them with enough food for a family of four for a week. The church also runs an important food pantry that offers needy Bronxites produce, meats, breads, dairy, juice, water, dry and can goods at no charge. Additionally, Reverend Crawford leads a daily Summer Food Program at Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church, which provides more than 300 meals for breakfast and lunch for those in need. The church is also very involved in numerous other issues as well and has an annual Back To School Health and Community Awareness Fair that helps students prepare for school and includes free food, entertainment, clothes, books and book bags. Pastor Crawford has also created Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church's annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration to engage the community in honoring Dr. King. I have had the honor of speaking at this important community event several times.

As Reverend Crawford has made Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church an integral member of the Bronx community, he has also been called to serve in leadership roles in numerous other organizations. He has served as the President of the Baptist Minister's Evening Conference of the Bronx, NY, and is also a member of the Baptist Ministers Conference of Greater New York and Vicinity, the United Missionary Baptist Association and The National Baptist Convention USA. Rev. Crawford has received numerous awards and accolades including the Religious Community Leader Award in 2007 from the NAACP.

Reverend Crawford is a pillar of our community, and it is only fitting that he is honored for his work on behalf of others. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Rev. Frederick Crawford for his consistently remarkable dedication to service and longstanding commitment to improving our community.

TRIBUTE TO BRENNA WESTERGAARD

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Brenna Westergaard for earning an American FFA Degree. Brenna was recently awarded at the National FFA Convention and Expo in Louisville, Kentucky on October 31, 2015. She was a member of the Adair-Casey FFA Organization and is the daughter of Lori Westergaard and Kevin Westergaard.

The American FFA Degree is awarded to members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to FFA and made significant accomplishments in their supervised agricultural experience. Brenna had to meet certain requirements, such as studying agriculture for three years in high school, earning money in an agriculture field and investing that money into her business, participation in community service and having a record of outstanding leadership ability and community involvement.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent leaders like Brenna in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to reach her goals. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating her on receiving this esteemed designation, and wishing her nothing but the best of luck in the future.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF EFFIE YEAW

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 25, 2016

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Effie Yeaw Nature Center as it celebrates its 40th anniversary. As its board of directors, staff, volunteers, and local nature enthusiasts gather to celebrate this wonderful occasion, I ask all of my colleagues to join men in recognizing and honoring the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for its contributions to the Sacramento Region.

The American River is an incredibly important part of our region and Effie Yeaw is the only environmental education center on the 23-mile American River Parkway. The 80-acre nature preserve with river access, oak woodlands, meadows, and ponds truly engages children and adults of all ages through their interactive exhibits and programs. These programs are essential to teaching our youth about the importance of protecting our local environment and the animals that inhabit it.

In 1955 Effie Yeaw, a teacher and environmental educator, began leading natural history walks in an area now known as the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and Nature Area, located along the American River in Carmichael. Effie Yeaw's efforts to raise awareness for preserving the lands along the river have been critical to the health of our local ecosystem. Her concept of a "Parkway" along the river has served as a guiding principal that has shaped the landscape of our region for the better.